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ACTIVITIES OF THE JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING 101st CONGRESS

REPORT BY WENDELL H. FORD CHAIRMAN

TO THE

JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

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JOINT COMMITTEE ON PRINTING

ONE HUNDRED SECOND CONGRESS

Created by act of August 3, 1846 (9 Stat. 114)

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Report of Chairman Wendell H. Ford

Activities of the Joint Committee on Printing—101st Congress

We have now completed two years together, successfully refocusing the Joint Committee on Printing on its printing oversight role, examining with care the Government Printing Office, how it is being run and where we could, holding the line on printing and publishing costs.

It's been said, "Wendell Ford is running the tightest little Committee on Capitol Hill." Dollars and cents have been a prime concern, but no one can deny that we have instituted government-wide initiatives that will continue to benefit our people and the Government for years. We have made possible a number of experiments in Government publishing utilizing modern electronic mediums, but at the same time we have held the line on costs. The best estimates I can find project a quarter to half a billion dollars of spending either saved or deferred in these two years. That of course, presumes the positions and policies we've put in place continue.

This has only been possible through the support of each Member of the Committee and their participation and willingness to assist me with the unusual demands this particular Committee puts on its Chairman.

I believe our single biggest initiative was bringing into general use recycled printing and writing papers throughout the Federal Government, and initiating and enforcing Federal paper specifications that are increasingly the standards for most state and local governments.

Our recycled paper has not yet achieved 100 percent usage at the Federal level and because of the required chemistry of certain inks and papers we may never be 100 percent, but in less than two years the Federal Government has become the biggest single recycled paper buyer in the country and recycled paper is in general use in Congress, Federal Agencies and Departments. Tell me where else Government has worked that quickly.

Cost has been a very supportive element in this program. A soft paper market and an eager, competitive U.S. paper industry has made it work. In the first twelve months of our bulk paper purchases the Government Printing Office paid on average 12 percent less for the recycled paper it purchased than it had in the previous 12 months for virgin fiber papers.

When we began, principals at the Government Printing Office were telling us, "this will never work." They told us if we were

going to find the supplies the Government needed, each paper bid should be split between recycled and virgin fiber paper. I felt only a direct market test requiring 100 percent recycled product could truly test what was available in the market place and at the same time tell the paper industry how committed this Committee and the Congress is to using recycled paper. From the first quarterly bid opening at GPO we were getting 97 percent coverage of the Government's bulk paper needs. That's as good as GPO does on average. This initial effort reinforced my belief that the paper industry was moving much more quickly into recycling than our Government experts were aware.

Last summer we introduced four new paper specifications including recycled copier paper—the most widely used publishing paper in Government—as well as recycled forms bond and stationery. This time EPA questioned the availability. Initially we had price and supply problems with copier paper, but copier paper of all kinds was then in tight supply. In our last quarterly bid I'm told prices were down 22 percent and we're able to buy all we need.

My one big disappointment in recycled paper was newsprint for the *Congressional Record* and *Federal Register*. GPO made an aggressive effort to buy recycled newsprint and they did find suppliers. But the lowest responsive bid would have increased combined paper and mailing costs by 15 percent. In my judgment recycled papers have to be very competitive and such additional cost could not be justified. I have left the Public Printer with the instruction to test the market again before the end of this calendar year in the hope that competitively priced newsprint can be found.

Experiments With Modern Electronic Mediums:

At the Committee's insistence the Government Printing Office moved forward five pilot projects for distribution of Government information to Depository Libraries:

—The Census Disc on CD-ROM.

—The Toxic Release Inventory (EPA) on CD-ROM.

—The *Congressional Record* (1985) on CD-ROM.

—The Economic Bulletin Board on-line to 100 libraries.

—The Energy Department's abstracts on-line to 18 libraries.

All of these projects are either in progress or completed and are being evaluated.

An important question was raised with the electronic "on-line" projects, i.e. cost-sharing. For the purposes of these projects, the Government required "shared" costs. A General Accounting Office evaluation is expected by the end of the year.

—At my direction GPO tested its *Congressional Record* on-line search project with four Senate offices. All four found it to be "unfriendly" and not competitive with private sector products. The Public Printer was instructed to continue to develop the system. The Committee is indebted to the Ranking Minority Member, Mr. Roberts of Kansas, for defining for GPO what the

Congress is looking for and encouraging GPO to move forward aggressively in this area.

Oversight:

Title 44 instructs this Committee to remedy neglect, delay, duplication or waste in public printing. To that end:

—We instituted the first public hearings this Committee has held in memory.

—Requested the Comptroller General to conduct the first complete audit of the Government Printing Office in eight years. GAO could only give an opinion on the last year of GPO financial activity because of limited record availability and only a "qualified" opinion that the balance sheet as of September 30, 1989, met its standards. GAO could not give a certified statement on GPO's income and expenses, but recommended an annual financial audit of GPO which the Committee supports.

—At the Committee's direction, GAO conducted the first audit of GPO's management and found deficiencies in record-keeping, policy direction, workforce and equipment usage, and high rates of paper spoilage. GAO found repeat contract awards to poor performers in the GPO procurement system and billing information to customers was found to be inadequate. Future planning did not begin at GPO until the GAO team arrived. The Public Printer has since notified the Committee of his plans to rectify some of these problems. A long term (5 year) plan for GPO's future, long sought by the Committee, has not been provided as of this date.

—In a separate report of GPO's internal financial management system, GAO found that controls over accounts receivable were weak and controls over receipts and disbursements were inadequate. Financial statements were incomplete and policies and procedures for these areas were outdated. We are awaiting the Public Printer's response.

—The Treasury Department, with assistance from GAO, found GPO was not reconciling certain suspense cash accounts. After notification by the Committee, some reconciliation was made. I continue to be concerned that GPO's conformity to Treasury standards is incomplete.

—At the direction of the Chairman, the Public Printer was instructed to collect nearly $200,000 in outstanding travel advances going back as far as 6 years. Conformity to GSA travel receipt procedures also was requested, but not yet accomplished.

—At the Committee's request, Inspector General Offices in a number of Executive Branch agencies investigated and made recommendations on cost-effectiveness, efficiency and economics involving Agency printing.

—The National Aeronautics and Space Administration's Inspector General recommended that NASA shut down five of its six printing plants with a one time savings of $1.5 million, and additional annual savings of more than $2.5 million. He ques-

tioned $9 million in new printing and duplicating equipment NASA management planned to purchase.

—The General Services Administration's Inspector General found the Agency exceeded its authority in expanding printing services. Correction of this activity will reduce Government costs by a minimum of $10 million.

—The Inspector General of the Department of Housing and Urban Development found the JCP staff was correct in its assessment and recommended closing HUD's printing plant operation with an annual savings of an estimated $250,000.

—Army's Auditor General found the Agency had purchased printing equipment without JCP approval and at a much higher cost than GPO could procure the work or even print it in its own facilities.

—The Department of Defense is proposing a consolidation of printing operations of the Departments of Army, Air Force, Navy and the Defense Logistics Agency under Navy management. Navy reports that their preliminary analysis indicates projected savings of more than $25 million annually.

—At the Chairman's request, the Commerce Department's Inspector General investigated computer "viruses." The I.G. found not only an instance in a Census Bureau diskette passed to GPO, but 16 other instances of "viruses" in products of five other Commerce agencies for the 12 month period ending November, 1990. On the Census diskette alone early diagnosis saved millions of dollars. As a result of this inquiry, a Department-wide early detection system has been established to protect against "malicious" software.

—A preliminary report by the Air Force Auditor General finds "misstatements" of the benefits for printing equipment purchased for the Air Force Accounting and Finance Centers. The Committee requested a justification of the equipment purchases which did not have prior JCP approval.

—The Inspector General at the Office of Personnel Management is investigating the Agency's Multiple Award Federal Supply Schedule for "Total Quality Management" training programs. The Chairman rejected a $720,000 waiver requested by the Environmental Protection Agency for printing a TQM manual workbook supplied by one of the OPM-designated contractors.

Additionally:

—$24.0 million of new printing equipment has been rejected for Federal Agency printing plants;

—$37.6 million of new equipment for the Government Printing Office was rejected pending the development of a long-term plan for GPO activity that met JCP approval and a reevaluation of this equipment by the new Public Printer;

—The Public Printer has adopted recommendations for cutting overhead costs advocated by the Committee in the areas of managerial training, bonuses, travel, subscriptions and over-

time. I am told he cut GPO's operating costs by 5 percent in his first year on the job and has pledged a 3 percent reduction in Appropriations from Congress.

—In the past two years the Committee has been particularly vigilant in bringing down the cost of designing and printing annual reports to the Congress of the 267 Agencies of Government. Annual savings are estimated at $4 million.

—I have also insisted that Government employees continue to pay for their own business cards. There has been a groundswell in Government to overturn this rule. If permitted, costs to the taxpayer would be astronomical.

—The Committee was also able to cut in half the cost of the *Congressional Directory* for the 101st Congress. I approved its development as an electronic data base for use in Congress and sale by the Superintendent of Documents.

—*Our Flag* won the Blue Pencil Award for Outstanding Government Publications, sponsored by the National Association of Government Communicators.

I believe over the past two years the Committee has demonstrated it has the tools and facility to fight our most persistent problem—the increasing costs of Government printing and publishing. I think we all agree that these costs are a constant censor of public information, and I am sure that a continued effort to hold the line on these costs must be this Committee's most important job.

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